

V. HAS THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ANY DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES ?

This question has come into prominence through the debate in the General Assembly over the consolidation of Danville and Louisville Theological Seminaries. The majority report of the Assembly's Committee upon Theological Seminaries recommended that the Assembly should not give its assent to this consolidation, mainly for the following reason : "The Agreement for Consolidation expressly excludes the teaching of the distinctive principles of our church."

The distinguished elder who presented the minority report, and who was the first speaker in favor of the consolidation, joined issue with the majority report right here, and stoutly maintained that our church has no distinctive principles which differentiate us from the Northern Presbyterian Church. The difference between the two churches is one of expediency merely, and not of principle. And his argument in support of this position was a very adroit one. Inasmuch as a church's principles are contained in its constitution, its doctrine and governmental standards ; and inasmuch as the doctrinal standards of the Northern and Southern Churches are the same, and their other standards nearly the same, therefore in the nature of the case there can be no differences between the two Churches founded on authoritative constitutional principles.

This argument of Col. Bullitt has made at least one convert, for we find it echoed in the columns of the *Southern Presbyterian* for May 30th, p. 5 :

We used to think that the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of our Church constituted its distinctive principles. It seems, however, that marginal notes have been added without being printed, and we have men who talk of distinctive principles as if those principles were of con-

stitutional authority. For ourselves we distinctly repudiate any and all such traditional views when they are advanced in this manner. Our church, as a church, has no business with "distinctive principles" which are not part of our constitution. Privately we may entertain prejudices, and profess views extra confessional, but to saddle them upon the church as distinctive of the church without consent of that church is going it a little too strong for us. We must legislate on the basis of the standards and regardless of traditions, prejudices and distinctive principles. Any other basis is unconstitutional and wrong.

All of which reminds us of a little incident in the life of Artemus Ward. Artemus was one day accosted by an inquisitive stranger, who was bent on taking his measure from a moral point of view. "He axed me," says Artemus, " 'what was my prinserpuls ?' I said I haint got any, nary prinserpul ; I'm in the show bizness."

The Southern Presbyterian Church, it seems, has been in " the show bizness" these forty-one years past, and so far from having any principles which warrant our separate and independent existence, we " haint got any, nary prinserpul."

We propose to show in this article, that the separate existence of our church is not a mere question of expediency, nor is it due to private prejudices, nor is it a geographical accident; but that it is founded upon and justified by fundamental principles. And we will take up the gage of battle, which these brethren have thrown down, and appeal directly to our Standards as the supreme arbitrator in this discussion.

Of course, if we were discussing all that divides us from the Northern Church, we would have to give this article a much wider sweep. We would have to treat of at length, what Dr. Beattie* in his argument for the Kentucky consolidation termed the distinctive features of our church,

* In justice to Dr. Beattie, it should be said that his plea for the Kentucky consolidation "was on a different line from Col. Bullitt's; and that we have his assurance that in the new Kentucky Seminary the distinctive principles of the Southern Presbyterian Church will be fully recognized.

matters of administration and practical policy, rather than of constitutional principle.

For example, we differ from our brethren North as to the best policy to be pursued towards our brethren in black. We agree with them fully so far as the principle is concerned, that our colored members have an inalienable right to all the principles of the Church of Christ, irrespective of their race and color. But we differ on the question of policy, our church insisting that it is for the best interests of both races that the negro be set apart in a church to himself.

In the matter of woman's sphere in the church, there is no difference in principle. We have never heard that anybody in the Northern Church denies the canonicity of the second chapter of First Timothy. And yet, throughout that church, by reason of their Christian Endeavor Societies, they are rearing up a generation which knows no distinction of sex in the conduct of divine worship.

Still further, there stands between the two churches, the grim specter of the Walnut Street Decision, which puts every theological seminary, every denominational school or college, every church building, every dollar of invested church funds, at the mercy of whatever ecclesiastical party may obtain a majority of votes in the General Assembly.

These practical matters have no right to be called distinctive principles, yet they are none the less potent in keeping the two churches apart, and have, in fact, more influence on the popular mind than deeper issues in which the constitution of the church is concerned. Beyond this brief allusion, however, they have no further place in the discussion before us, which will be kept within limits that are strictly constitutional ; only asking our readers to admit in evidence, not only the standards of the two churches, but also some of the well-known facts of recent church history. Admitting the proposition that the distinctive principles of a church are to be found in its constitution alone, how can there be differences in principle between the Northern

and Southern Presbyterian churches, when “ the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of said churches are the same, and their other standards are nearly the same ?”

This question, which is found on the third page of the Agreement for consolidation of the Danville and Louisville Theological Seminaries, figured extensively in the discussions before the assembly, and we ask the reader to keep his finger on it, for we want no better basis upon which to found our statement of the distinctive principles of our Church.

With regard to the doctrinal standards, the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms which are those of the Westminster Assembly and are still common to both the Northern and Southern Presbyterian churches, we think the reader will fully agree to the following proposition. In case there is any part of these common standards which has been strictly adhered to by one of these churches, but departed from by the other, that part of the standards becomes a distinctive principle of the church adhering to it, and is a just ground of separation from the church which has departed from it. No one can deny this proposition in the abstract, however they might dispute its application to the case before us. But once admit this proposition, and it will be seen how two churches can have the same constitution and yet different principles. The church holding to the constitution is certainly actuated by different principles from the one violating the constitution. And the question before us becomes a simple question of fact : has our church remained true to our standards, while the Northern church, in some important particulars, has departed from them ? Now it is a notorious fact that it was just such a violation of the express provisions of the constitution which gave the occasion for the organization of the Southern Presbyterian Church. In May, 1861, the Assembly of the then undivided Church, met in Philadelphia, and under the influence of the war excitement, passed a paper, known from its author, as the Gardiner Spring Reso-

lutions. Resolution 2 reads :

Resolved, That this General Assembly, in the spirit of Christian patriotism which the Scriptures enjoin, and which has always characterized this church, do hereby acknowledge and declare our obligations to promote and perpetuate, so far as in us lies, the integrity of these United States, and to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its functions under our noble Constitution; and to thin Constitution in all its provisions, requirements and principles, we profess our unabated loyalty.

Let any man who has two eyes look at this and then at

Confession of Faith, Chap. 31, Sec. 4, "Synods and Councils are to handle and conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical, and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth."

It will be seen at once that this section of the Confession, embodying the great scriptural truth of the spirituality of the Church, becomes the distinctive principle upon which our church rests its separate existence.

The violation of this principle by the Northern Church cannot be more forcibly stated than was done at the time by fifty-eight members of that same Assembly, under the leadership of Dr. Chas. Hodge. At the conclusion of an elaborate protest against the Spring Resolutions which Dr. Hodge drew up and all fifty-eight signed, this language is used:

"The General Assembly, in thus deciding a political question, and making that decision practically a condition of membership to the Church, has, in our judgment, violated the constitution of the Church and usurped the prerogative of the Divine Master."

This action of 1861 is paralleled by a similar action in 1866. The Northern Assembly of 1866 required of all its Presbyteries, in receiving a minister who had lived South during the War, to examine him,

"Whether he has in any way . . . been concerned at any time in aiding or countenancing the rebellion and the war which has been waged against the United States, and if it be found that he has been so concerned, that he be required to confess and forsake his sin in this regard before he shall be received.

"Church sessions are also ordered to examine all applicants for church membership by persons from the Southern States; and if it be found that

of their own free will they have taken up arms against the United States, such persons shall not be admitted to the communion of the Church until they give evidence of repentance for their sin and renounce their error.”

And if any one should think that all this was done in the fever heat of a great civil convulsion, and was repented of when the passions of that cruel strife had cooled, we answer by giving one more signal instance in line with the above, and long after the war. In 1882, at the Atlanta Assembly, the Southern Church took the initiative towards healing the breach between us and the Northern Church by passing the *mutatis mutandis* resolution as follows :

“That while receding from no principle, we do hereby declare our regret for and withdrawal of all expressions of our Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon, or offensive to the Presbyterian Church **in** the United States of America.”

This was telegraphed to the Northern Assembly, then meeting at Springfield, Ill., which adopted the same resolution and telegraphed it back to Atlanta. And then came an unofficial telegram from their moderator to ours, informing us of the further action of their Assembly making this addition to the concurrent resolution: “ That in the action now being taken, we disclaim any reference to the action of preceding Assemblies concerning loyalty and rebellion, but we refer only to those concerning schism, heresy and blasphemy.” If ever there was a time when their former violation of the constitution of the church might have been repented of and disowned, here certainly was that time. Instead, the one exception which they made to their *amende honorable* is a flagrant repetition of that very violation of constitutional principle which at the first separated their church from ours. And here the matter has stood for nineteen years, with the Confession of Faith, chapter 31, section 4, on our side, and this historical record of the Northern Church on the other.

The only possible answer to this is to say that our church

is as deep in the mud as they are in the mire—in other words, that our war record, as a church, is as inconsistent with the principle of absolute separation between things political and things spiritual as that of the Northern Church. This charge was made on the floor of the last Assembly, and it has been repeated elsewhere by those who ought to have known better.

In refutation of this charge, we might put in evidence the solemn assertion of the spirituality and independence of the church, which runs through that immortal document, the “Address to all the churches of Jesus Christ throughout the earth,” drawn by the hand of Thornwell, and adopted by our first Assembly, December, 1861. We might also allude to the reaffirmation of the same principle by the Assemblies of 1866, 1870, 1875, 1867, etc.

But we cover the whole ground by directing attention to the action of our Assembly in 1875 and 1876. See first, Minutes 1875, p. 45, where there is record of the following action :

“Whereas, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States did, at its first organization in 1861, and also at various times since, formally and distinctly declare its conviction as to the nature and functions of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially as to its non-secu'ar and non-political character ; and,

Whereas, Notwithstanding this, it may be that certain expressions have been inadvertently admitted into some of the papers on our records, which, as it is alleged, are not consistent with the well-considered and formal views afore-said ; therefore,

Resolved, That this subject be referred to a committee of three, whose duty it shall be to make a careful examination, and make report to the next General Assembly, to the end that no vestige of anything inconsistent with the clearly defined position of our General Assemblies, may be left to impair the testimony of our church upon this vital point.”

The committee contemplated in this resolution was duly

appointed, and reported to the Assembly of 1876, and that Assembly took this action upon their report : “Inasmuch as some incidental expressions uttered in times of great public excitement are found upon our records, and have been pointed out in the report of the committee aforesaid, which seem to be ambiguous, or inconsistent with the above declarations and others of like import, this Assembly does hereby disavow them wherever found, and does not recognize such as forming part of the well-considered, authoritative teaching or testimony of our church.”

We could wish the time to come when our brethren North shall have cleared their skirts of all departures from constitutional principle by a like ingenuous and sweeping declaration.

We have thus sufficiently exhibited the comparative record of the two churches upon the great principle of the spirituality, the non-secular and non-political character of the Church of Jesus Christ.

We make our appeal to this record of facts, as showing our fidelity to this principle of our common standards, and their departure from it, and as fully justifying our laying claim to this, as a distinctive principle of the Southern Presbyterian Church.

But there is another difference between the two churches, with regard to our common doctrinal standards, which is of a still more fundamental character. This second difference is the allowed latitude of subscription to the Standards themselves, which was characteristic of the New School body from its origin (see Palmer’s *Life of Thornwell*, pp. 182-198), and was taken into the bosom of the reunited church North, when the Old and New School Assemblies came together in 1869.

The official statement of this union, as given in the Historical Summary prefixed to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., is : “In 1869 the ‘two bodies claiming the name and rights of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and which separated in

1837, were reunited 'on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common Standards.' ”

The subscription to these common doctrinal standards, which the Constitution of the reunited church imposes upon each of its ministers, elders and deacons at their ordination, is found in the familiar question, “Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures ?” This question, it need hardly be said, has been the same in every branch of the Presbyterian Church, Old and New School, North and South, from 1821 to this present time—Upon the basis, then, of “the Standards pure and simple, and with this iron-clad subscription to the system of doctrine embodied in the Confession of Faith, the New School was taken into the bosom of the Old School, and they twain became the present Northern Church. And yet it was a notorious fact, that there were, at the moment of union, tolerated in the New School body, those who held doctrinal views at variance with the system of doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith. The proof of this is from the Minutes of the Old School Assembly, 1868, in a protest (not against this union, but against certain New School propositions relative thereto,) which protest contains the following statements :

After eight specifications of doctrinal error to be found in the New School Church, they continue : “We are far from believing or insinuating that these doctrines are generally approved by the New School Church. We have no doubt that they are repudiated by many in that Church as sincerely as they are by us. But they are allowed by them as consistent with the system of doctrine contained in our Confession. The fact is notorious. It is confessed and avowed. These doctrines have been for years matter of public discussion. They have been taught in some of the Theological Seminaries of our land. Students from those seminaries, professing these errors, are freely admitted into the New School Presbyteries. Men of the highest eminence in the other branch of the Church, teach them publicly from the pulpit and from the press. They are contained, more or less of them, and some of the most serious of them, in books and tracts issued by the Publication Committee of the New School body. They are openly avowed in some of the periodicals

sustained by ministers of that Church, and apologized for by others. These are not matters of speculation belonging to the schools, but concern doctrines taught in the Catechism, and presumed to be known even by the children of the Church." [Minutes (O. S.) 1868, p. 658 ; Moore's Digest, 81).

The number of signers to this protest was fifty-nine, and the inclusion in this number of such names as Chas. Hodge, A. A. Hodge, E. P. Humphrey, R. J. Breckinridge, John C. Barkus, is a sufficient guarantee of the accuracy of these statements.

It was upon this state of facts that the Southern Assembly based the judgment expressed in its pastoral letter of 1870. While this letter was addressed to our own churches, it was occasioned by an overture from the Northern Assembly, looking to organic union, and referring as a precedent to the union the year before of the Old and New School North. "This reference," said our pastoral letter, "is singularly unfortunate ; for, in our judgment, the negotiations through which this union was consummated, betrayed those sacred testimonies of a former generation, for the most precious and vital of the doctrines of grace. Our difficulty is not the mere fusion of these two Assemblies into one. A similar fusion took place six years ago between ourselves and the United Synod of the South. But the difference between the "two cases is wide as the poles. The Synod of the South united with us upon the first interchange of doctrinal views, upon a square acceptance of the standards, without any metaphysical hair-splitting to find a sense in which to receive them, and without any expunging of whole chapters from the history of the past, with the sacred testimonies with which these are filled. It is not, therefore, the amalgamation of these bodies at the North, simply considered, which embarrasses us ; but it is the method by which it was achieved, the acceptance of the standards in no comprehensible sense, by which the United Assembly becomes a sort of broad church, giving shelter to every creed lying between the extremes of Arminianism and

Pelagianism on the one hand and of Antinomianism and Fatalism on the other.”

The language of this pastoral letter may be harsh; it was keenly resented by our Northern brethren at the time; (see Dr. VanDyke's pamphlet July, 1870), and it is stronger language than we would use. But it brings out distinctly the fact on which we are insisting, that there is a latitude of subscription to the Confession of Faith tolerated in the Northern Church which we have never allowed.

The reader will also notice the contrast to which allusion is made in the Pastoral Letter, between the methods in which the union of Old and New School was consummated in the North, and the similar union which took place in the South six years before. The union between the Southern Assembly (Old School) and the United Synod of the South (New School), like the union of the two bodies at the North, was effected upon the basis of the common standards, but not until it had first been ascertained through conference committees that the two churches were in entire accord as to their doctrinal views.

And there was another feature of this union in the South which deserves special attention. And that was the retention of what now appears as Par. 75 of our Book of Church Order, “Ministers seeking admission to Presbytery shall be examined ... as to their views in Theology and Church Government.” This, as the reader may know, is the famous “examination rule” adopted by the Old School Assembly just after the New School schism, and designed to protect the sounder portion of the Church from the intrusion of heretical views arising in any other portion of the same body. The history of the examination rule in the Northern and Southern Churches is a striking commentary on the point we are discussing. It was in force in the Northern Assembly, Old School, as late as 1866 (see the reference to that Assembly above); it is no longer to be found in the Constitution of the Northern Church.

How this rule was adopted we have no means at hand of

ascertaining. It was in force four years before the new school reunion, it has since disappeared, and we do not think we are far wrong in conjecturing that here is a case of *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*.

Two or three years ago a minister went from one of our Southern Presbyteries to take charge of a large church in the Northern Assembly. He wrote back to one of our church papers an account of his reception into their Presbytery, and he commented especially upon the fact that he was received upon his certificate from his former Presbytery, without examination, "thus emphasizing the essential unity of the Church." When we read this we felt like saying, "your glorying is not good." No more effectual safeguard to the doctrinal purity of the Church was ever devised, than the examination rule which was thus disregarded, or rather was no longer in force in the Northern Church.

Our contention then is, that our brethren North tolerate a latitude in subscription to the standards which we do not. And our line of argument has been, first, the known "loose construction" principles of the new school body North ; second, the union of the old and new school bodes North upon the basis of the common standards, when it was a known fact that the new school body included some who held doctrinal views inconsistent with the system of doctrine embodied in these standards ; third, the emphasis laid upon this line of proof by the abrogation of the Examination Rule, at the time of the New School Union, or subsequent thereto.

The reader will now be ready to ask the question, Do you then charge the Northern Church with being an unsound body ? Not at all, we not only do not make such a charge, but we do not believe it when anybody else makes it. That church has made full proof of its devotion to sound doctrine upon the persons of such heresiarchs as Profs. Swing, H. Preserved Smith, Briggs and McGiffert, to say nothing of others of lesser note. Yet we believe that they might not have had these heretics to get rid of if they had

not broadened their basis of subscription in the manner we have just indicated.

The reader is now asked to turn back to that quotation* on which he was asked to keep his finger. We have examined sufficiently the first half of it viz: “ The Confession of Faith and **the** Catechisms of the two Churches are the same.”

We think we have demonstrated that while this is true, yet through the departure of the one church from some portions of these common Standards, they may and do become the distinctive principles of the other.

2. We turn now to the second part of that quotation, “and their other Standards are nearly the same.” The other Standards referred to are, of course, the Form of Government, the “Rules of Discipline and the Directory for Worship.” With regard to these we will make a statement of fact, and have the reader to judge how far this part of the Constitution is the same or nearly the same in both Churches.

When the two Churches separated in 1860 the whole Constitution WAS the same—the Constitution of 1821. In 1879 the Southern Church adopted a new Book of Church Order, including Form of Government and Rules of Discipline.

In 1884 the Northern Church adopted new Rules of Discipline, which follow pretty closely those of the Southern Church ; and in 1894 the Southern Church adopted a revised Directory for Worship ; thus the Northern Church has still the old Form of Government and Directory for Worship practically unchanged, and the Southern Church has new Governmⁿtal standards throughout.

This simple historical statement ought to give any man pause, who is disposed to pronounce this part of the Constitution of the two churches “ nearly the same.” But let him go further and make a careful comparison between our new Form of Government and the Old Book, which is still

* “The Confession of Faith and Catechisms of said Churches are the same, and their other Standards are nearly the same.”

the standard of church polity for the Northern Church, and he cannot but be impressed with the many important differences between the two churches in the matter of Church Government.

The most superficial comparison of the two books, will cause anyone familiar with the practical working of our New Book to notice the absence from the Old Book, of such requirements as, the opening and closing of the meetings of session with prayer ; the review of the deacons' books by the session ; the examination rule, which has already been commented upon ; and the next paragraph in our Book Par. 76, which requires the written subscription of every minister to his ordination vows, upon his reception into Presbytery.

He will also notice how much larger the New Book is than the Old, the one almost twice the size of the other. And, besides such matters of detail as have just been referred to, he will notice that the enlargement of the New Book is brought about mainly by the fuller statement of important principles, some of which are not recognized at all in the Old Book, or are only obscurely hinted at there.

It is a well-known fact that the old Book of Church Order, while it comes down to us from the Westminster Assembly, does not fairly represent the principles of church polity held by the Westminster divines. Along with the Presbyterianism of the Assembly itself, there are found in the Form of Government, Erastian, Congregational and Prelatical elements, forced on the Assembly by the Parliament of England. Every student of Church History knows how this came about. It is sufficient for our present purposes, to see how the Congregational element in the Old Book is distinctly traceable, in its definition of Church Government, Ch. 8, Sec. 1. The student who has the Old Book before him will observe in this section both the failure to assert the *jus divinum* theory of church government, and the assertion that "government by congregational assemblies is agreeable to the Word of God."

The leaven of Prelacy also may be traced in Chs. 3 and 4, when the terms bishop and pastor are restricted to the minister of the word; in Ch. 5, where the elder is simply a layman, the representative of the people; and in Ch. 13, sec. 4, where the elder or deacon is ordained without the laying on of hands of the session, prayer by the minister constituting the whole of the ordaining rite.

While the Old Book thus exhibits distinct evidence of admixture from sources outside of pure Presbyterianism, our New Book is a far more accurate representation of the real ecclesiology of the Westminster Assembly. It is in fact the Presbyterianism of Rutherford and Gillespie, revived in the last generation by Thornwell and Breckinridge, and embodied in our new Form of Government by such ecclesiastical statesmen as Adger and Peck, and Armstrong and E. T. Baird, and Stuart Robinson, and Girardeau and Palmer.

In our search, then, for the distinctive principles of the Southern Presbyterian Church, we have only to notice those principles of church polity which are clearly stated in our New Book, and either not recognized by, or dimly hinted at in the Old Book. We can only note this in the briefest manner. There is, first, the doctrine of the divine right of Presbytery, which rings out in the very first words of our New Book, "The scriptural form of church government, which is that of Presbytery"—and so throughout—and which cannot be found at all in the Old Book. There is next, that vital distinction as to church power, Par. 16, the clear discrimination between the power of order, which is several, consisting of the duties severally pertaining to the minister of the word and the ruling elder in their respective relations to the church ; and the power of jurisdiction, which is joint, and which is exercised conjointly in church courts. The reader will search in vain for any hint of this distinction in the Old Book. Still further, you find in our New Book a clear definition of the vocation, par. 96—the three-fold call—"the calling of God by his spirit ... the

manifest approbation of God's people, and the concurring judgment of the lawful court of Christ's house." Here, again, is a scriptural principle of which the Old Book contains hardly an intimation.

A like dear and important statement of principle is found in the doctrine of ordination, laid down in par's. 99, 100, 101 of our Book. The vital principle there stated is that ordination is the act of a court made up of Presbyters, formally inducting into office one who, in their judgment, has been duly called of God thereunto.

The explicit language of our Book in the above paragraphs and elsewhere, guards this most important principle from Congregationalism, on the one hand, and Prelacy on the other.

In the Old Book there is no statement of the doctrine of ordination at all, and while scriptural principles are recognized in the provisions for the ordination of a minister, ch. 15, they are, as we have seen, completely set aside in the form for the ordination of ruling elders and deacons, ch. 13. I might mention other distinctive advantages of the New Book over the Old, such as its clear demarcation of the sphere of jurisdiction of each court in the series from the session to the General Assembly ; also, its limitation of the right of voting in the election of church officers and pastor to communicants only.

But I must hasten on to that which is the crowning distinction of our new Form of Government. In no other statement of constitutional principles, will you find a clear recognition of that great doctrine which lies at the head of the Presbyterian system, the doctrine of the parity of the eldership. Our book states this principle in so many words, in Par. 43, where it is said that . . . "ruling elders possess the same authority in the courts of the Church as the ministers of the word." It is given practical recognition in the provisions for ordination, where the elders lay on hands and give the right hand of fellowship, not only in the ordination of elders and deacons by the session, but especially

in the ordination of ministers by the Presbytery. And it is further recognized in making the ruling elder an indispensable constituent of the quorum of Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. And we have brought this principle into still greater prominence by the amendments to the New Book, in 1888, authorizing "elder moderatorship" of the higher courts of the Church ; and in 1899, permitting a ruling elder to deliver the charge to the people in the installation service. The importance of this principle requires no comment, but we could wish that we had space to show, how much of the worthy history of the past is perpetuated in these features of our Form of Government, what struggles toward the incorporation into the Constitution of the Church of a Scriptural Church polity, have therein attained a triumphant issue.

We have thus made a brief comparison between our Form of Government and the Old Book, which is still the constitutional expression of the principles of church polity held by the Northern Church.

It passes our comprehension to see how any man, not wilfully blind or culpably ignorant, can make this comparison and still say that there is little or no difference in constitutional principles between the two churches.

And this brings us back to our starting point. We believe that if ample citation and careful examination of the law and the testimony can prove anything, we have demonstrated that the separate and independent existence of the Southern Presbyterian Church rests upon the bed-rock of fundamental principle. While a variety of causes at the first combined to force us out of the great church of which we once formed an integral part, yet we owe our continued separation from our brethren North, and our own special place in the Church Visible, to these distinctive principles, our loyalty to which is no small part of our duty to Him, "whose we are, and whom we serve."

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